

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6728

INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY LIMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 0521

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, CI, US, PE

SUBJECT: TERRITORIAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN CHILE AND BOLIVIA

1. DURING INTERVIEW TO PRESENT NEW DCM BOYATT, AMBASSADOR ASKED FONMIN CARVAJAL JANUARY 21 HOW MATTERS STOOD WITH RESPECT TO CHILEAN PROPOSAL FOR TERRITORIAL EXCHANGE WHICH WOULD GIVE BOLIVIA OUTLET TO SEA.

2. AFTER LONG RESUME OF DEVELOPMENTS TO DATE, ALONG LINES ALREADY REPORTED, CARVAJAL INDICATED THAT AS FAR AS CHILE IS CONCERNED, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO MOVE FORWARD AT ONCE WITH WORK ON DETAILS OF PROPOSAL. CHILEANS HAVE IN MIND USING LONG-ESTABLISHED BILATERAL BORDER COMMISSION TO ESTABLISH PRECISE FRONTIERS. WHILE COMMISSION HAS BEEN DORMANT SINCE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN BOLIVIA AND CHILE WERE BROKEN IN 1962, IT COULD QUICKLY BE REFURBISHED AND PROVIDED WITH TECHNICAL EXPERTS ON BOTH SIDES. AT SAME TIME, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS. NO COMMITMENTS WOULD BE CONCLUDED, OF COURSE, UNTIL PERU HAD ACCEDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH TERMS OF 1929 TREATY.

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3. CARVAJAL ENVISAGED CHILE'S PROPOSAL FOR DEMILITARIZATION OF THE BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR TO THE SEA AS A FURTHER STEP IN THE SPIRIT OF ANDEAN PACT DISARMAMENT DISCUSSIONS. IF BOLIVIAN FORCES WERE LIMITED TO POLICE, CORRIDOR WOULD SERVE AS A BARRIER TO ARMED ENGAGEMENTS BY ANY OF THE THREE STATES INVOLVED IN THE AREA. IF BOLIVIAN TROOPS WERE TO BE STATIONED IN THE CORRIDOR, HOWEVER, PROSPECTS FOR TROUBLE AMONG THE THREE WOULD BE VASTLY INTENSIFIED, SINCE PERU WOULD SEND FORCES TO BORDER ZONE TO COUNTER BOLIVIAN FORCES AS WELL AS EXISTING CHILEAN FORCES. CARVAJAL LAID STRESS ON REQUIREMENT FOR A GUARANTEE OF THE INTEGRITY OF THE NEW ARRANGEMENT BY THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM.

4. CARVAJAL FURTHER INDICATED THAT LAUCA RIVER WATER RIGHTS MIGHT BE A DIFFICULT PROBLEM. AS CHILE SEES IT, BOLIVIANS DID NOT USE LAUCA WATER, AND DID NOT PROTEST DURING LONG PERIOD IN WHICH CHILEAN DIVERSION WORKS WERE BEING CONSTRUCTED. ONLY LATER DID THEY MAKE THIS SUBJECT THE CAUSE FOR BREAKING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. CHILEAN POSITION WILL BE THAT, AS LONG AS BOLIVIA WAS NOT USING THE RIVER WATER WHICH, ACCORDING TO HIM, WAS SIMPLY EMPTYING INTO A DESERTED SALAR, CHILE SHOULD HAVE FULL RIGHTS OF DISPOSITION.
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